

TWO HOURS IN THE LIFE OF GEORGE WASHINGTON
(a 45 minute avant garde film)

(each scene lasts approximately 5 minutes, and most scenes last longer than they "should")

SCENE 1: LIVING ROOM

A shabby living room complete with a sofa with the stuffing sticking out here and there, a fireplace, and other excessories. On the sofa sit George and Martha Washington in appropriate wigs and costumes. Martha is darning a scarf, but after each stitch the darning needle just barely misses poking George's eye. George stares at the fire but is not oblivious to the peril his eye is in. By jerking his neck at the appropriate moments he dodges the darning needle almost inconspicuously. Feigning nonchalance, he glances at a grandfather clock (it is 2:00) and then returns his stare to the fire. He inches away from Martha towards the other end of the sofa, leaving a conspicuous empty space between them. Martha turns her attention to George, suddenly aware of his maneuver. "George?" she asks, not unlike a schoolteacher discovering a misbehaving student. "Yes, Martha?" asks George, without removing his attention from the fire. Martha resumes darning, her gaze returned to it as well. "George, do you know who I'm knitting this scarf for?" George stands up and goes to the fire, using the poker to poke at it. George then walks to the door. Martha looks up. "Where are you going?" she asks. "I'm going to chop some firewood," George replies. "Couldn't you have one of the servants do that? I wanted to tell you about Benjamin Franklin's latest invention." George replies, "You can tell me when I get back. I feel like getting some exercise." George leaves and Martha resumes knitting.

SCENE 2: THE STABLE

A horse stable with 40 stalls and 40 horses. George has a one-sided chat with each horse, patting them on the head and saying the kinds of things pet owners say to their pets. Each horse has a name and a special place in George's heart. To a white horse named Lincoln he is very mysterious in his attitude. After giving attention to each horse (despite the indifference of some) he returns to Lincoln, saddles him up, and rides out of the stable.

SCENE 3: THE GROUNDS

George rides past his mansion, which is beautiful and thus bears no resemblance to the shabby little living room that is presumably inside. He rides across vast fields and into a vast forest, a look of anger on his face. His riding is on the slow side. He rides and rides and rides. Finally he reaches a clearing with a neat stack of firewood.

SCENE 4: THE CLEARING

In the clearing George uses the firewood to build a fire, in a section of the clearing designated for that purpose. Then he takes out from under a rock a partially carved, exquisitely intricate piece of wood hidden beneath a rock. George takes out his knife and begins whittling, and the piece of wood turns more beautiful. The anger diminishes into sorrow, followed by tears. He continues whittling. Anger suddenly returns. He hurls the carved wood into the fire, hastily mounts Lincoln, and rides off. He does not put out the fire. He rides and rides through the forest, until he comes to a stream.

SCENE 5: THE STREAM

George is no longer angry. He dismounts Lincoln, leaving the horse to drink in the stream. George walks off-camera as we continue watching Lincoln drinking water. An off-camera sexy female voice says, "Oh, George! I thought you'd never get here!" Off-camera George is heard saying, "Thanks for waiting." Lincoln remains on-camera. He strolls around a little, but in a different direction than the one George went in. We wonder why we're spending so much time watching a horse.

SCENE 6: LIVING ROOM

The fire is nearly dead. Martha summons a Servant and has him go get some firewood. A moment after he goes out the door she stares at the door, undefinable curiosity in her face.

SCENE 7: THE STREAM

George, back on-camera, is running after Lincoln. He catches up easily and mounts. Then he rides off-camera.

SCENE 8: LIVING ROOM

Martha is still staring at the door. The Servant returns with firewood and rebuilds the fire. Martha's eyes remain fixed on him from the moment he enters the room.

SCENE 9: THE STABLE

George is back in the stable, dismounting Lincoln and unsaddling him.

SCENE 10: LIVING ROOM

George returns to the sofa, but the living room is now empty. Martha's knitting is next to him on the sofa. George summons a Servant, who isn't the same servant as the one Martha used. He tells the Servant to make some tea. The clock indicates that it is 3:50. The Servant gets the tea kettle and goes towards the door to fetch some water from the well. But a moment before he leaves the room George says,

"Wait." The Servant stops without turning around to face George. "Where's Martha?" George asks. There's a long pause. "Upstairs taking a nap, sir." "Go fetch the water!" George shouts. There is fury in his voice, but it is make-believe, for he is smiling.

SCENE 11: THE WELL

The Servant approaches a well and fetches water out of it to put in the tea kettle. "Some nap," he whispers to himself.

SCENE 12: LIVING ROOM

The Servant returns with the water and heats it in the fireplace. George is writing a letter to the King of France about the weather as tears roll down his face. The Servant who helped Martha enters the room, uses the poker on the wood in the fireplace in an aimless manner, and leaves the room. His actions are as insignificant as that of a bad actor in a bad play. A moment after he leaves the room Martha enters and resumes her place next to George on the sofa. She resumes her knitting, but this time she does not endanger George's eye. George is no longer crying. He has grown serious and appears to be very much involved in the letter he is writing about the weather. The servant who fetched the water now removes the tea kettle from the fire. He pours two cups of tea and brings them on a tray to the sofa as the grandfather clock chimes 4:00. George puts down his writing to take a cup of tea. Martha says, "No thank you." George looks at her in surprise and then suddenly smiles. It is a contagious smile, for it spreads to the Servant and then to Martha. FADE OUT.

the end